

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 A-01 SCA-01 CIAE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7925

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1. THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO OPEN A PHILIPPINE CENTER IN NEW YORK ON NOVEMBER 14. THESE PLANS HAVE BEEN REVIEWED BY OUR CONSULAR STAFF AND OF SPECIAL CONCERN ARE THE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED WITHIN THE PLANNED CENTER AND THE VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR THE VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF STAFF MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES WHO WILL WORK AT THE CENTER. BIENVENIDO A. JIMENEZ, JR., CHIEF OF THE PHILIPPINE HOUSE COORDINATING OFFICE, DEPARTMENT OF TRADE, STATED THE NEW CENTER WHICH WILL BE LOCATED AT FIFTH AVENUE AND 46TH STREET WOULD HOUSE THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

A. PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL. NO SPECIAL VISA PROBLEMS FORESEEN.

B. PHILIPPINE MISSION TO UNITED NATIONS. NO SPECIAL VISA PROBLEMS FORESEEN.

C. DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM. THE DEPARTMENT PLANS TO SEND AT LEAST ONE REPRESENTATIVE TO PROMOTE TOURISM. HE WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE ATTACHE STATUS AND WOULD BE ATTACHED TO THE CONSULATE GENERAL. A-2 CLASSIFICATION APPEARS APPROPRIATE.

D. THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE PLANS TO SEND A FEW OFFICERS

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TO PROMOTE TRADE WITH THE PHILIPPINES. WE UNDERSTAND THESE OFFICERS

WILL BE ACCREDITED IN WASHINGTON. A-2 CLASSIFICATION
APPEARS APPROPRIATE HERE ALSO.

E. PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK.NO SPECIAL PROBLEMS FORESEEN.

F. PHILIPPINE AIRLINES. NO SPECIAL PROBLEMS FORESEEN.

G. RESTAURANT.THE RESTAURANT WOULD BE OWNED AND MANAGED
BY THE PHILIPPINE CENTER MANAGEMENT BOARD, WHICH IS A PHILIPPINE
GOVERNMENT ENTITY, AND NOT REPEAT NOT A CONCESSION. THE
RESTAURANT WOULD BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. IN FACT, JIMENEZ SAID
THAT RESTAURANT IS DESIGNED TO ATTRACT THE GENERAL PUBLIC TO
THE CENTER. RESTARUANT IS TO BE STAFFED BY 5 COOKS, 20
WAITERS, AND 5 IN MANAGEMENNQEWXF. JIMENEZ THOUGHT THERE WOULD
BE NO VISA PROBLEM IN RECRUITING RESTAURANT STAFF IN
PHILIPPINES AS EACH WORKER WOULD BE A PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT
EMPLOYEE COVERED BY A FONOFF NOTE. JIMINEZ SAID INDONESIA HAD
A SIMILAR OPERATION IN NEW YORK AND SAID PRECEDENT HAD BEEN
ESTABLISHED. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT RESTAURANT EMPLOYEES
SHOULD BE COVERED BY H-2 PETITION. IF DEPARTMENT AGREES, WE
SUGGEST THAT INS/NEW YORK BE REQUESTED TO EXPEDITE APPROVAL
OF PETITIONS IF AND WHEN FILED BY THE PHILIPPINE CENTER
MANAGEMENT BOARD.

H.TRADE PROMOTION AREA. MOST OF THE GROUND FLOOR SPACE
WILL BE OCCUPIED BY VARIOUS EXHIBITS OF PHILIPPINE PRODUCTS
AND HANDICRAFT. JIMENEZ SAID NEW YORK LAW SPECIFIED THAT
ESTABLISHMENTS ON FIFTH AVENUE SUCH AS THE CENTER MUST SELL
AT LEAST SOME PRODUCTS ON RETAIL BASIS. ACCORDINGLY, A SMALL
AREA FOR RETAIL SALES HAS BEEN SET ASIDE IN FRONT OF TRADE
PROMOTION AREA. AS CONTEMPLATED, THE RETAIL SALES FACILITY AT
THE PRESENT TIME APPEARS TO BE INCIDENTAL TO THE GENERAL OPERATION
OF THE TRADE PROMOTION FACILITY. ONCE THE RETAIL SALES FACILITY
IS IN OPERATION, HOWEVER, THERE WOULD BE NO WAY TO PREVENT THE
EXPANSION OF THE FACILITY TO THE POINT WHERE IT WOULD DOMINATE
THE GROUND FLOOR ACTIVITY. THE COMBINATION OF A GOVERNMENT
OPERATED FACILITY STAFFED BY EMPLOYEES WHO ARE NOT SUBJECT TO
MINIMUM WAGE STANDARDS AND/OR NOT PAID COMPETITIVE WAGES IS LIKELY
TO LEAD TO PROTESTS FROM COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE AREA.
THE DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE ON THIS ASPECT OF THE CENTER IS
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REQUESTZD.

2. IN ADDITION TO THOSE PERSONS WHO PLAN TO STAFF THE PHILIPPINE
CENTER, MANY OTHERS WILL TRAVEL TO NEW YORK FOR THE OPENING
CEREMONIES. THESE WILL INCLUDE THE OFFICIAL PARTY OF MRS.
IMELDA MARCOS, THE WIFE OF PRESIDENT MARCOS; OTHER
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS; TECHNICIANS CONCERNED WITH THE THE

PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN THE BUILDING;
A PHILIPPINE DANCE GROUP WHICH IS NOW PERFORMING AT THE
SPOKANE FAIR; TEN FASHION MODELS; AND TEN MEMBERS OF A
CHORALE ENSEMBLE. THE GENERAL PUBLIC WILL NOT BE CHARGED ANY
ADMISSION FOR THE FESTIVITIES.

3. THE EMBASSY WILL FACILITATE ISSUANCE OF AS MANY NON-
IMMIGRANT VISAS AS POSSIBLE. WE WOULD APPRECIATE THE
DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS AND GUIDANCE ON THE RESTAURANT AND
RETAIL SALES PROBLEMS, HOWEVER, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. AS
JIMENEZ CITED AN INDONESIAN OPERATION IN NEW YORK AS A
PRECEDENT, WE WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE ANY BACKGROUND ON HOW
SIMILAR PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN RESOLVED IN THE PAST. THIS WILL
ASSIST US IN REPLYING TO INQUIRIES FROM HIGH GOP OFFICIALS.
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